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CIA Reportedly Spurred Soviet Mig Pilot's Defection

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TOKYO — The CIA, with the help of a British intelligence agent, prompted the defection of a Soviet pilot with his sophisticated Mig25 fighter plane five years ago so the West could study the craft, the Kyodo News Service said yesterday.

The news agency, quoting unnamed Japanese security officials, said CIA agents, on a secret mission in Moscow, offered Soviet Lt. Viktor Belenko political asylum in the United States in return for a fully equipped Mig25.

The CIA refused to comment on the Kyodo report, and no official Japanese comment was immediately available.

The pilot flew the supersonic interceptor "Foxbat" jet to a civilian airport on Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido on Sept. 6, 1976. The plane was airlifted to an airport near Tokyo, where U.S. and Japanese experts examined it.